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ABSTRACT

Over the last 20 years, changes in the American culture and the perceptions of women's roles have altered the impact of work on rural women. These changes have altered new needs for vocational preparation and job structures. The "new feminism" has caught rural women in a double bind. They are participants in a modern society saturated with the new ambitions of women, while they are among the most conservative and traditional people. Rural women find juggling home and career more difficult than metropolitan women for two primary reasons: lack of commercial support systems and deterioration of the traditional community system in rural areas. To alleviate the problems of the rural working women, two things should be done. First, thinking about rural women's occupations needs to be reoriented. Since rural women avoid nontraditional occupations, women should be given access to interstitial occupations. Women need help in identifying possibilities and determining those ideas that are feasible for them. Second, delivery systems should be reoriented to provide accessible and appropriate vocational preparation to rural women. Three alternative ways to prepare women for interstitial occupations are community apprenticeships, school-based enterprises, and network-based training and support services. (Questions and answers are appended.) (YLB)

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Faith Dunne

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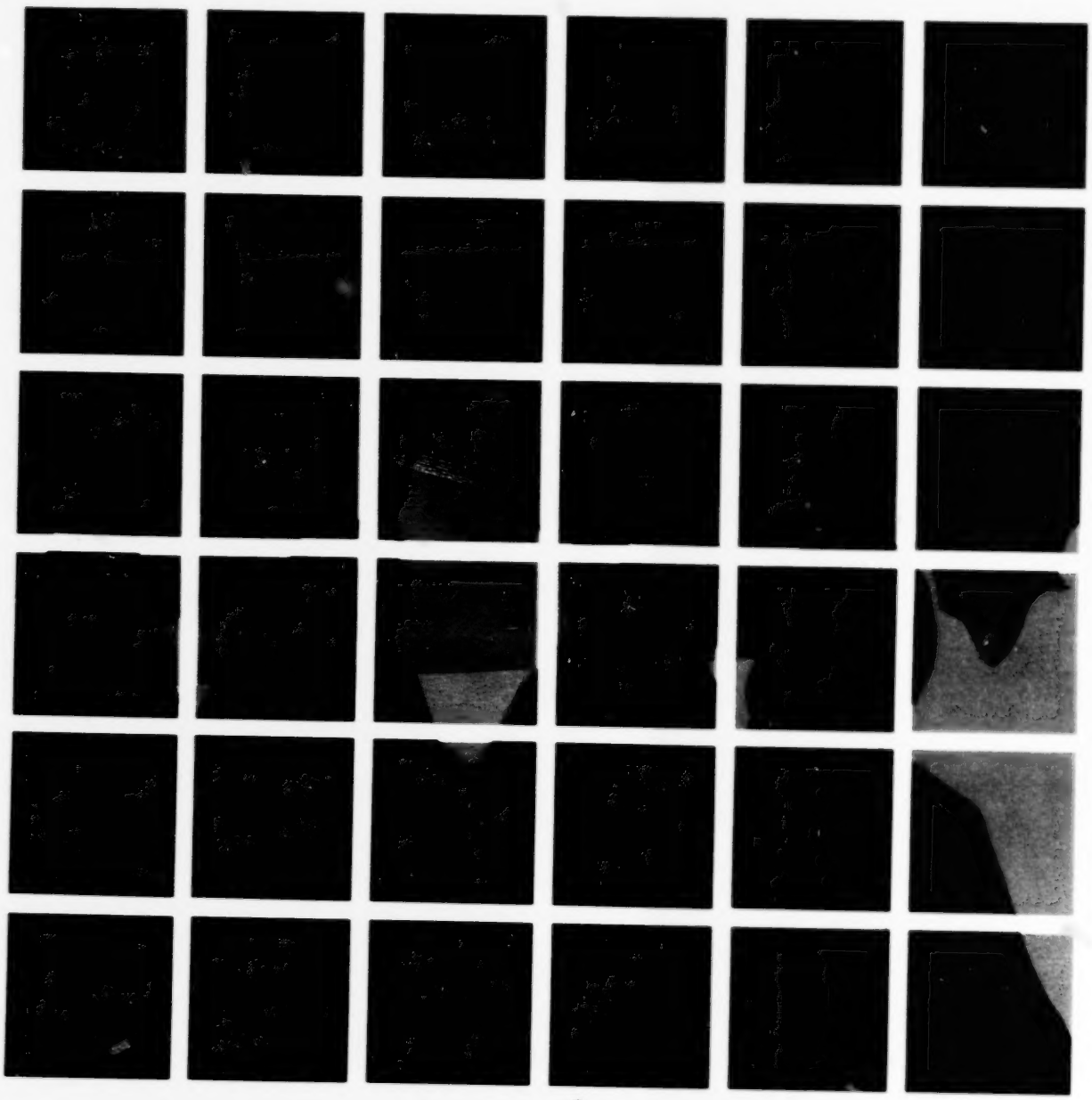

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Occasional Paper No. 108

PLACES IN THE SYSTEM: NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OF RURAL WOMEN

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FOREWORD

The rural population continues to grow dramatically. The seventies brought a new in-migration of over 3 million people to rural America, a growth rate exceeding that of United States metropolitan areas by 40 percent. Rural educators face most of the problems and issues common to all of education today, as well as a wide range of considerations unique to their particular setting. Even though rural districts contribute greater percentages of their local resources to education, services cost more to provide than in urban schools. Sixty-four percent of the teachers responding to a 1980 survey of teachers in small rural schools had received no special training for teaching in small schools. Small districts have trouble hiring specialists (counselors, special education teachers, and others) and therefore most ask staff to wear several hats at once. Often special needs, such as programs for the handicapped, remain unaddressed.

Historically, vocational education has addressed the needs of rural education through programs such as agricultural education and home economics. Student organizations like FFA have also contributed significantly to the occupational training and the development of leadership capabilities of rural youth. We need to continue our efforts to provide the best preparation possible for students in rural areas. We should develop incentives to encourage people to choose careers as rural educators, and also produce materials designed to address the special needs of teachers and staff in small schools. Among other concerns, attention should be given to eliminating traditional male-female occupational choices, to the needs of older students, to entrepreneurship education, and to bringing high technology to rural areas.

Dr. Faith Dunne has an undergraduate degree in English from the University of Michigan and graduate degrees from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has taught at the secondary and university levels, served as an administrator for teacher certification programs, and has been a faculty member of the Dartmouth College Department of Education since 1974. She currently serves as department chair. In the field of rural education, Dr. Dunne has worked extensively as a consultant; presented and published numerous papers, articles, and books; and conducted various research projects. She has also served as a local school board member in Hartland, Vermont, and thus brings the additional perspectives of parent, citizen, and board member to this seminar.

On behalf of The Ohio State University and the National Center for Research in Vocational Education, I am pleased to present this address by Dr. Faith Dunne on "Places in the System: New Directions for the Vocational Education of Rural Women."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director

PLACES IN THE SYSTEM:
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION OF RURAL WOMEN

Introduction

Rural women have always worked hard. But, over the last 20 years, changes in the American culture and the perception of women's roles have altered the impact of work on rural women, and have created new needs for vocational preparation and job structures. In this discussion, I will address these changes and the needs they generate.

Case Studies

Sixty-five years ago, my neighbor's mother, Margaret, was abondoned by her husband, leaving her with five children to raise and no money. This scandal rocked the small Vermont town where I live. Margaret brought her children to live with her parents on their farm. She walked 3 miles each morning to the mill in North Hartland village where she worked hard for a low wage. Friends and relatives were sympathetic and helped look after her children, supplied her parents with additional food, and make sure the children had clothes and medical attention. Because she was a woman, everyone knew that she could not live independently, that she could not make an adequate living, and that the community had to support her materially and psychologically.

Five years ago, my friend Jean was abandoned by her husband, leaving her with three children to raise and no money. Her situation was not considered a scandal, because it frequently happens today, even in Hartland, Vermont. Friends and relatives were sympathetic and talked about what a creep Joe was. They realized that Jean would have trouble keeping the wood furnace burning with only little girls to help, but no one felt compelled to do anything. As a mutual friend said, "It's good that Jean is a registered nurse. That means she'll be alright on her own." In fact, Jean drives 20 miles each morning to the hospital where she works hard for a low wage. She makes more money than Margaret did (even on a comparative basis), but she spends it in ways Margaret never dreamed of—for child care, frozen dinners, clothes that she no longer has time to make, and frequently, for liquor. Because she is a "new woman," everyone knows that she can live independently and earn an adequate living and that no one needs to help her.

New Feminism

These stories typify the mixed blessings of the "new feminism," at least as it affects the lives of rural women and girls. Rural women are caught in a double bind. On the one hand, they are participants in a modern society saturated with the new ambitions of women; they are independent, and like to work outside the home and bring home their own paychecks. At the same time, rural women are among the most conservative and traditional people in the nation.* They believe, by and large, in traditional female roles: the importance of home, family, and community; and canning tomatoes and ironing their husband's shirts. Most have been raised with an image of the "good woman" who does not complain about hard work, remains relatively subservient to her husband, and does most of the household chores.

*Rural people, in general, are more traditional in their value orientations than are their urban counterparts, according to O. F. Larson (Ford 1978, pp. 91-112). Further, as Flora and Johnson (Ford 1978, pp. 168-181) suggest, rural women, as the conservators of the culture, tend to be strong advocates of traditional roles and functions.

When these two visions join—the woman on the *Cosmo* and the mother blanching green beans on the cookstove—they sap a woman's strength. It is very hard to work an 8-hour shift and then come home to 3 loads of laundry, a sink full of dishes, a husband and children who want different kinds of attention, and two flats of increasingly leggy tomato plants. It is even harder to come home to all that work without a husband. I do not mean to suggest that this juggling act is easy for the metropolitan woman, but I do suggest that it is harder for the rural woman, for two primary reasons.

First, there are commercial support systems for metropolitan working women that do not exist in rural places. Amenities such as laundromats, 24-hour markets, day care centers, and public transportation make it possible for them to manage impossible demands. Such resources, however, are rarely among the conveniences offered by rural communities. Opportunities for job training, educational programs, and psychological counseling give despairing metropolitan working women new hope; in rural areas, such programs are often very far away.

Second, something peculiar has happened to the traditional community support system in rural areas. The role expectations of women—held by both women and men—do not seem to have changed. For example, androgynous roles are not common on the ranches of eastern Montana, where even branding practices have gender-specific job allocations: women give shots, clip on ear tags, and make dinner; men ride, rope, castrate, and eat. The comparable worth argument has not become salient in western New Hampshire. A woman who works on the assembly line at a factory near my college told me she disapproved of the recent promotion of the plant's first forewomen. "She'll take that job away from a man with a family to support," she said. I pointed out that as the wife of an often unemployed seasonal worker, she also had a family to support. "Well, that's different," she said.

Although the role expectations for rural women are relatively similar to those of 10, even 40 years ago, the expectations of men and of the community have changed. Rural communities' social and religious sanctions that made Margaret's abondonment a scandal in 1920 are weakening. Rural men believe that their wives can make it on their own and feel less responsibility to stay married or to continue supporting their families after a divorce. Many women share this belief, at least before the event. The result is inevitable—and unfortunate. The rural divorce rate, once far below the metropolitan level, is rapidly rising. Women who are often prepared for primarily domestic roles are suddenly entering the labor market without skills or a husband.

Moreover, the community networks that once provided both goods and solace to women in need have deteriorated partly because the perception of the helpless woman has faded and partly because the traditional providers are no longer available. Margaret's mother looked after the children while Margaret worked. Her aunts made clothes and canned extra vegetables for the family to eat in the winter. Jean's mother, however, lives in a trailer park in Florida, and her aunts work full-time. They could not possibly offer the kind of assistance on which Margaret depended.

Women in the Work Force

The results are not particularly appealing. According to the 1980 census, nearly 13 million rural women were in the work force, and 24 percent of nonmetropolitan households are managed by females. Thus, many of these women are single parents and generally employed in low-wage, traditionally female jobs.

Although the increase in female work force participation and in low income, single-parent families is a national phenomenon, it has a more severe impact on the rural woman than on the metropolitan woman. Changing customs and federal regulations have made a difference in the kinds of

jobs available to women in metropolitan areas, but little has changed in the countryside. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of women in professional and technical jobs in the United States as a whole rose 9.2 percent; between 1970 and 1978, the number of rural women in such occupations dropped 4 percent. During the same time, the number of women managers and administrators rose 91.7 percent nationally but only 1.8 percent in rural areas. For rural women, the major increases were in the poorly paid clerical (up 4.2 percent) and service (up 4.4 percent) jobs.

As a result, the rural woman worker—married or unmarried—is at the bottom of the labor market. In 1980, the median income for rural households in which both spouses worked was $24,707—below the national average. The median income for a rural female head of household was $10,634, only $3,500 more than the average for her unemployment counterpart. If she has children under 6 years old, her situation is worse. The employed single mother with young children has a median income of $7,026; unemployed, she earns $3,546 annually. I cannot imagine how they survive. With these figures in mind, it is hardly surprising that female-headed households represent the largest proportion of the poor in nonmetropolitan areas. In fact, nearly 44 percent of these rural families live below the official poverty line.

These women are the invisible victims of the feminist movement that has done so much for many American females. I read *Savvy* magazine and I am told how to manage my stock portfolios; I read *Working Woman* and I am told how to manage my male employees. But these are not the problems of the working rural woman. Nowhere do the magazines for the "new woman" tell my divorced friend Barbara how to earn a living in a small town dominated by a logging camp that hires virtually no women. Nowhere do they tell my friend Carol, the chapter I aide, where she can take the courses to complete her teaching certificate, when she has a family to take care of and the nearest college is 90 miles away. And nowhere does anyone tell my friend Amy who relies on Aid for Dependent Children (ADC) funds what a single mother should do with her small children when the one day care center is full and the available private sitters offer children the stimulation level of a dark closet.

The Role of Vocational Education

How can we, as education professionals, help these women to resolve their dilemmas? The present trends will not be reversed. Rural women will continue to enter the work force and to adhere to traditional roles at home and in the workplace. And they will continue to support themselves and their children in a culture that now rarely provides built-in supports for women. It is important that we design suitable programs to train these women with skills. This way women can manage their lives and satisfy their need for independence and income without abandoning the values and loyalties with which they were raised and with which they are raising their children.

Traditional vocational education approaches do not meet the needs of these women. First, they are generally housed in schools—secondary or postsecondary—and are oriented to adolescents. Many adult women do not feel comfortable in school settings when they have access to them, and often, access is legally limited, once they have graduated or dropped out of school.

Second, traditional vocational programs, at least in rural areas, offer training that tends to lock rural women into low-paying, traditionally female jobs. Most school-based programs adhere to the "job available" model, preparing groups of young people for opportunities that exist in the area. Such occupations are generally sex-stereotyped, at both the preparation and hiring levels. Rural schools (especially those that are not physically attached to an area vocational center) rarely encourage girls to enter nontraditional programs. Moreover, most rural girls actively avoid the male-dominated fields (Carlson 1981). After graduation, the pattern remains the same. Employers,

especially in local businesses, remain steadfastly stereotyped in their hiring practices. In my 1980 study of vocational education in Vermont and New Hampshire, a business teacher summed up the attitudes of typical small-town employers:

> A bank called the other day and said they were looking for a boy that could eventually move up into a managerial position. I said, 'We have three girls who have straight A's.' They insisted on a boy—they didn't want a teller, they said. I gave them a boy with a C+ average.
>
> (Rosenfeld 1981, pp. 111-112)

Standard school-based programs contain too much of the culture they serve to help women break out of traditional molds.

Recommendations

I have two major recommendations to alleviate the problems of the rural working woman. First, we need to reorient our thinking about rural women's occupations. Second, we need to reorient our delivery systems to provide accessible and appropriate vocational preparation to rural women.

Reorientation seems dictated by the apparent intractability of the rural value structure, at least as it impacts on women. Rural women will not move into nontraditional occupations in any great number. And opportunities in traditional occupations seem unlikely ever to permit women to live independent of what Ehrenreich (1983) describes as the male-defined "family wage." Since I assume that it is unacceptable to all of us to have the median rural female householder eligible for food stamps, something else needs to be done.

If we turn away from stereotyped jobs for either sex, what is left? We have opportunities that fall between the cracks of the standard labor market options. Also called interstitial occupations, these opportunities are jobs that can be split off from larger units and adapted to the local community or developed to meet local or general needs in new and attractive ways. Women can exploit these interstitial occupations because they are not part of the male-dominated occupational hierarchy. They can adapt to them because they are sex-stereotyped. And they can earn a living from them because their income is not limited by the "pin-money" tradition that often restricts women's wages.

Let me give three examples of what I mean by interstitial occupational opportunities:

- Eight northeastern counties in North Carolina spend $10 million annually on school lunches. The lunches, however, are prepared in a metropolitan area and shipped to the schools. The lunches are expensive, wasteful, and revolting. In any of these schools, women could organize a hot lunch program to meet federal specifications, yield a reasonable salary, and probably enhance the quality of the lunches. Trained providers could change the lunch program to help local women and the local economy.

- Central Vermont's ski country is an upscale environment, attracting tourists from affluent parts of Connecticut, New York, and Massachusetts. Tourists are fond of local products with a "country flavor," but they quickly tire of maple syrup and its related products. Louise Downey-Butler found a niche in this opportunity structure and created an herb business called Rathdowney Herb and Gourmet Foods. She sells products ranging from potpourri to pharmaceuticals. She has built this business into a combination retail and national mail-order operation that yields an income sufficient to support a family.

- The growing resort area in the Upper Connecticut River Valley of eastern Vermont and western New Hampshire provided Judy Kaufman with another kind of occupational niche. Kaufman reasoned that where there are large numbers of affluent retirees and second home owners, security problems are inevitable. She now specializes in installing first-rate locks and security systems. She is now a general locksmith and can do anything from opening a safe to cutting a key. Her profit is from the protection of second homes in the region.

Opportunities differ substantially, but these three examples share certain fundamental characteristics. They are outside the standard employment market; they are appropriate for traditional women; and they do not require high levels of academic preparation. In fact, in a study or rural entrepreneurship, Ptarmigan Teal (Rosenfeld 1981) found that female entrepreneurs are not particularly well educated: two-thirds of the self-employed women she interviewed had spent 12 years or fewer in school. Finally, each of the three examples represents a means by which women can earn a living without moving to a metropolitan area and without violating the conservative values of the community.

Interstitial opportunities exist in virtually every rural community. Giving women access to them, however, is not a simple task. Women need help in identifying possibilities and in determining which ideas are feasible for them. Further, most of these enterprises require entrepreneurial skills in addition to the skills needed to perform the particular task, classroom-based vocational programs do not seem tailored to meet these training needs. Even the best of the entrepreneurship curricula tend to teach highly definable skills, such as bookkeeping and inventory management. A program covering the more amorphous subjects a rural woman needs to run a small business in a local community would be difficult to design. Further, the chief skills for creative entrepreneurship—inventive planning and operational flexibility—are not easily taught in classrooms. I suggest three alternative ways to prepare women for these kinds of jobs. Each of the following is appropriate for adult as well as precareer women:

Community Apprenticeships

This is a modern version of traditional practice pioneered by Daryl Hobbs and his colleagues at the University of Missouri. High school students conduct a comprehensive survey of occupational and employment-related skills in the local area, in order to identify a spectrum of potential mentors. The selected mentors specify the practical skills and background needed to succeed in the particular occupation. A conract is drawn up between the school and the mentors, who agree to teach the necessary skills and information to interested students. The community mentors receive their payment and the students their academic credit only when it can be demonstrated to the school's satisfaction that the student has mastered the required competencies. Done properly, this strategy can dramatically expand the range of local occupational options available to women, while fostering productive community participation in the school's program.

For example, there may be a person in a community who runs a furniture refinishing and chair caning business and a woman (high school or beyond) with an affinity for this occupation. It makes no sense to use the traditional strategy of developing a classroom-based program that would have to enroll a certain number of students annually to justify an instructor's salary. The community apprenticeship scheme, however, allows the student to acquire on-the-job preparation for a locally relevant occupation, a mentor in the locality, and enhanced prospects for staying at home and making a living.

School-based Enterprises

This type of program, first proposed by Jonathan Sher in 1977, has been tested successfully in several places, especially in Georgia, under the aegis of Dr. Paul Delargy and the Mott Foundation. Its basic purpose is to create businesses and services under the auspices of the school system. There are stringent requirements of these enterprises: they must be economically viable; they must meet community needs and/or tap local potential; they must inculcate both employment-related skills and entrepreneurial talent; and they must provide students with a combination of cash, work experience, and academic credit.

In Georgia, rural students operate a successful printing company, a model feeder pig operation, a day care center, sheep-raising business, and other enterprises. This strategy has sparked renewed motivation for academic achievement among participating students, as well as providing students with quality employment preparation that few vocational programs can match. Further, it is particularly appropriate for training women to exploit interstitial occupations. Professionals can help to identify unfilled niches in the occupational structure and can train students in a controlled, yet realistic environment. Students who acquire skills in this kind of supportive setting should have little difficulty transferring those skills.

Network-based Training and Support Services

This last strategy has not been completely tested, but it could provide decentralized training for the large numbers of women who cannot regularly leave their homes for instruction. Training would emanate from an academic center by telecourses, print- and computer-based curricula, and traveling consultants. Women who have achieved certain skills levels would be appropriately accredited and hooked into a network that would provide both employment opportunities and support.

The nearest real-life examples of this strategy are the home day care networks run in several metropolitan areas. These networks consist of women who run small, home-based child care operations. The women have training sessions, equipment exchanges, consulting support personnel, and regular meetings to share ideas, problems, and interests. Often consultants who are experts in particular fields assist the women. In rural areas where isolation is a major problem, these networks could be particularly useful, encouraging women to start small-scale enterprises and helping them obtain training and support. The development of microcomputers as a means of communication could greatly enhance the effectiveness of this strategy.

Summary

These ideas are not magic or calculated to transform the lives of rural women overnight. Clearly, standard strategies have accomplished little and promise little for this generation of rural women. Therefore, it seems to make sense to try some new ways of thinking about occupations for rural women and some new strategies for enabling them to engage in productive employment. Perhaps these suggestions will provide a starting point for other nonstandard concepts of training and employment for rural women. Given the bleak prospects offered by current strategies, these ideas are certainly worth trying.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Faith Dunne

Question: What do you think about the conflicts between cottage industries and organized labor?

Recently, there has been a major battle in New England between the home knitters and the garment workers' union. I was raised in a pro-labor family, and I have always been pro-union in principle. I understand the unions' argument: home knitters are not protected, they are underpaid, and they don't have adequate benefits. But I also understand the position of the home knitters, who see cottage industry as the only way they can earn money. They are furious at the union, which they see as interfering city people trying to take away their means of earning money.

The unions say it's in the interest of the laborers to have all work done in a union shop. The home knitters say if the work is done in a union shop, they won't be able to do it. Cottage industry allows them to escape problems that beset rural working women: lack of day care, transportation, and money for working clothes. Ultimately, I guess I agree with the home knitters, although with some uneasiness.

One encouraging word about that situation, however. A woman in Maine has made a job for herself by protecting home knitters. She advises them on sound business practices ("don't turn over the product until they give you your check"), teaches them how to do their accounting and taxes and helps them fight the union. She may find a way to deliver benefits, possibly through group plans covering members of the home knitters association. (This also is an example of a woman who established an interstitial niche protecting the niches of other women.)

Question: How can we address all the varied needs of rural education?

When you give a speech about rural education, there are two ritual requirements. First, you must tell the audience where you live or what makes you an authority on rural America. Second, you must address the diversity of rural America. The problem with the second statement is that it doesn't get you anywhere. You have to look at one particular angle. My focus is basically nonfarm women and nonfarm women in communities that have a sufficient economic base to support enterprises beyond those that currently exist.

I didn't talk about farm women for two reasons: they are not the majority of the rural population, and women on farms, according to the Department of Agriculture definition, do not seem to be as desperate as their nonfarm counterparts. They work incredibly hard, usually combining unpaid farm labor with domestic chores, and—in 50 percent of the cases—hold a job off the farm as well. But they are not as prone to poverty as the group about which I am most concerned—the single, female heads of household and other underskilled women currently entering the labor market.

That explains why I have chosen to talk about this particular group. But it doesn't answer your question. Despite the diversity of rural life in this country, I have observed one consistent theme: the more control in the hands of the rural community members, the more likely a program will be

effective and accepted. This is true for women and for other rural citizens. But it is at least as true for them. Therefore, vocational training for rural women needs to enable them to create and maintain enterprises that are local in nature and that feed back into the home community.

Question: How will your suggested program answer the call for increased academic requirements?

This isn't going to make me popular in this context, but I think that the direct delivery of vocational training should be removed from secondary schools. This would make high schools academic in their orientation, making sure that graduates are literate, numerate, and knowledgeable about the basic governmental and cultural structures of our country and the world.

We could focus vocational preparation at the postsecondary level, in technical colleges that could offer very specific training to 18- and 20-year olds. They are more able than adolescents to pick an occupation and absorb training.

Ideally, I wouldn't limit vocational training to a specific age span. I would give all young people vouchers entitling them to units of training that they could save until they perceived a need to use them.

This kind of system would be invaluable to many of the young rural women I've worked with over the years. My colleagues and I found, over and over, that many 16-year-old rural girls will not look at realities of their own future. They will absorb information, apparently very readily. You can teach them the statistics on early marriage, women's job opportunities, salary structures, and welfare budgets. They take tests on the material; they discuss it in class. Then you say to an apparently attentive student, "Well, Tammy, what are you going to do after you graduate?" And Tammy simply goes into another gear and says, "Oh, Roy and I are getting engaged in December and I think I'll work at K Mart until I get pregnant." It is like talking to two different people.

When Tammy is 26, however, with 2 children and no Roy, she is going to be very, very deeply concerned about preparing for the future. If we could forget about forcing her into typing class as a high school junior, and let her use a training voucher at 26, she would not only be motivated to develop excellent skills, but she might even decide she wants to be something nontraditional, like becoming a welder, because she needs the money to support her family. That's not a decision she could conceivably have made at 16 because all the girls would have laughed and Roy might have broken up with her. At 16 that's more important than the kind of wage she will be able to earn in 10 years. At 26 the wage may well be more important.

Question: What changes do you suggest in secondary vocational education for rural schools?

I have spent the last 4 years studying small rural schools where vocational education is minimal. Often, however, what's there is very good. Home economics prepares both boys and girls for family life. Their function is to give young people raised in small, insular communities some information and options from the big world. The vocational agricultural program, often centered around the Future Farmers of America is often a major force within the community and a major source of community involvement and support. These programs are not what I would call vocational in a job preparation sense, but they do serve a vital community function.

In larger schools, especially the area vocational centers, there are some good programs, some excellent teaching, and excellent curriculum, but in rural areas they sometimes tend to be a mechanism for segregating college-bound from non-college-bound students. I don't know if this is true

in the metropolitan regions, but it is in much of rural America. For some of those kids, the vocational program is the only thing that keeps them in school; it gives them something to do that they feel is productive. I suggest that vocational education in rural places be tightly linked to the community, either through apprenticeship schemes or through school-based community development enterprises. These models support—and are supported by—the links between school and community that are already there in rural places and should be more effective because they work with rural strengths. The community-based models of vocational education could give kids the sense of productivity they get in standard programs and also train them effectively for work at home as well as elsewhere.

Question: Is it possible to clarify adolescent value conflicts before the problems occur?

I have two responses to that. The first is that you can clarify until you're blue in the face, but Roy is still first in Tammy's mind, and nothing will penetrate that. The second is that only realistic simulation seems to have a hope of clarifying anything for adolescents. Insofar as I've seen kids come to grips with values issues at all, it has been in the context of well-taught marriage and family life courses in home economics departments. They can sometimes penetrate the haze of hormones surrounding most adolescents that effectively keeps any real-life information from getting through.

One of the best examples of this is a teacher in western New Hampshire who got a call one day from the director of the local Planned Parenthood office. "What in Heaven's name are you doing over there?" the director asked, because she had experienced an inexplicable rush for appointments by high school girls suddenly interested in birth control. It turned out that the teacher had used a simulation exercise called "Adopt an Egg" with her Family Life class. The students each had to spend 3 weeks parenting a raw egg. They had to take the egg with them wherever they went (making sure it didn't break), unless they hired an egg sitter who would take over that task. They had to keep it warm, safe, and dry. After the first week, it stopped being funny. After the second, they were going a bit crazy. After the third, they went to Planned Parenthood. I thought that was effective values clarification, and it was effective largely because the girls learned from their own experiences.

Question: What is being done to prepare teachers for rural areas?

Generally, very little. Some places make an effort to prepare teachers for rural settings. Western Montana State, for example, has a program specifically designed to train people to work in rural Montana. These teachers learn to cope with the stress of isolation, to repair basic electrical and plumbing problems, to nurse snake bits, and shovel school doorways. But there are few such programs. Most teachers are still trained in towns and cities and are prepared for work there. When they come to the country, the results are often disastrous.

To teach effectively in a small rural school, one should be superbly educated, a well-rounded Renaissance person with a taste for the outdoors, and not needing cultural amenities. Many of these individuals are in the teaching profession today and need to be recruited for rural schools. Recruiting and retaining good teachers in rural areas is very difficult. (Massey and Crosby 1983). However, some strategies have worked well. One is a locally based teacher preparation program. The New Hampshire-based Upper Valley Teacher Training Program uses an internship model that combines rigorous classroom work with afternoon workshops and summer practica. It is much more rigorous than it may sound. Essentially, this program takes college-educated people who live in the area and want to find work there. They are granted a teaching certificate, not a degree—and is an excellent way of certifying—and preparing—teachers who are already committed to the area and want to stay. In addition, they are usually mature and stable, making them attractive to the local schools.

Again, I find myself wishing for a system of saving training credits. The people who enter this teacher preparation program are generally middle age women whose children are either grown or in school and who want to do something new. They make good teachers and they stay. I think you get more for your money generally when you train adults. They give more return on the training dollar.

Furthermore, local training may be the only way to get skilled teachers in many remote rural communities. A friend of mine once said to me, "It's easy enough to get teachers to move to Stowe, Vermont. It's not so easy to recruit in Alligator, Mississippi." The way to get teachers to Alligator is to find people who already want to be there and then train them to teach. They don't have to be recruited or convinced.

Question: Has corporate migration opened up new work opportunities in rural areas?

Not to any great extent. The corporations that have moved to the Sun Belt have provided more jobs, but they are operative jobs at the bottom of the wage scale. Most import their middle management from the home base. I do not know of many communties where a new company has provided an enhanced range of opportunities to local people. The migration, however, has had one positive effect. Operative jobs allow people to stay home who would otherwise be forced to move to the city to find work. This is no small benefit in rural places where the kids often want to stay home, and are forced only by necessity to seek out the bright lights of the nearest metropolitan area.

Question: You've told us a lot about Tammy and the problems she has with Roy. How about Lucille—as in "It's a fine time to leave me, Lucille."

I only know about Lucille from the song. The Lucilles I know are not farm women. They are upper middle class, educated, underemployed and looking for their "real selves," whatever that may be. They aren't women I worry about an awful lot. I don't know many working class women, or farm women, who have time to think a lot about self-actualization, which is presumably what Lucille was off looking for. Unless, of course, she's the one who ran off with Roy.

Question: How could the training vouchers you mentioned be implemented?

I don't see vouchers as an entitlement to be cashed in exclusively at vocational training centers. I would like to see them flexible enough to be cashed in for an apprenticeship within the community or for a course of study at a distant training center. Some people would have to leave the local community to get training. But for others, it would offer opportunities for training and work experience within the community that would permit them to remain. People who are uneasy with the idea of postponing training often ask me, "What are these young people going to do in the meantime?" That is not clear. Some will take menial jobs, save a little money, move in with their parents and, basically, do what they do now. Many of my older friends in rural Vermont thought they waved goodbye to the children when they graduated from high school. They find that their children return later and frequently, with children.

For some of these young people, deferred options might make the transition between home and the world less rocky and might help them remain independent. I would rather have my kids go through their rough patches at 18-24 than at 25-35. Deferred options might make that more possible.

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